

# Search Tips for Pioneer Library and the Internet

You can search Pioneer Library resources and the Internet more effectively if you apply techniques that narrow results and brings the most relevant pages to the top of the results list.

Below are a few strategies to help you successfully find what you are looking for.

## Select Keywords

The objective of keyword searching is to locate information that contain the keywords. Think of all the words that would always appear on that perfect page you are looking for. Be sure to select precise words and avoid common words such as the, of, and to.

## Fine-Tune Your Keyword Searches

The biggest problem most people have with search engines is that simple keyword searches produce too many search results. You can help avoid this problem by adding operators that fine-tune your keywords.

### AND Searches

If you get too many results, **AND** can help you narrow your search. Put **AND** between the terms you are searching.

For example, to search for weather lesson plans, type:

lesson AND plans AND weather

### OR Searches

If you don't get enough results, **OR** can help you expand your search. Think of related words or synonyms you can use to describe your search term.

For example, to search for dogs or canines, type:

dogs OR canines

### NOT Searches

If you are getting results that have nothing to do with your search, **NOT** can help you exclude specific topics. For example, "bass" can refer to fishing or music. You can exclude a word from your search by putting a **NOT** in immediately front of the term.

For example, to find Web pages about "bass" that do not contain the word "music", type:

bass NOT music

### Phrase Searches

Search for complete phrases by enclosing them in quotation marks. Words enclosed in double quotes ("like this") will appear together in all results exactly as you have entered them. Phrase searches are especially useful when searching for famous sayings or proper names.

Phrase example:

"All life is an experiment"

The ability to search for phrases can be surprisingly useful. If you suspect that your student turned in plagiarized work, type in a phrase or two from the paper and see if it turns up elsewhere.

## Additional Search Tips

- Use lower case letters with search terms.
- Use UPPER CASE letters with operators.
- **NEAR** - Searches words and phrases near each other, usually within 10 to 15 words of each other. For example, "lesson **NEAR** plans".
- **ADJ** - Searches words that are immediately adjacent, but also those where one word follows the other by up to 20 characters. For example, "stocks **ADJ** bonds".
- Wildcard symbol \* - Expands a search term to include all forms of a root word. For example, "econom\*" retrieves economy, economic, economist, etc. □